

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00  
NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00  
AID-05 ACDA-12 MCE-00 SSM-03 DOE-15 SOE-02 DOEE-00  
IO-13 HA-05 /113 W

-----018173 181441Z /46

O R 181256Z MAY 78  
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8079  
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
USINT BAGHDAD  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEBASSY KUWAIT  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
USLO RIYADH

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 2874

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1, 4  
TAGS: PEPR, SY  
SUBJECT: REACTIONS TO SENATE VOTE POSITIVE

1. SUMMARY: MFA AND BAATH PARTY REPRESENTATIVES REACTED POSITIVELY TO SENATE ACTION ON AIRCRAFT SALES. BAATHIS DID NOT GO AS FAR AS MFA IN CREDITING SADAT WITH BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT AND SAID THAT PROOF OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S VICTORY WOULD BE IN HOW HE BUILDS ON IT TO ATTAIN COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT. NEVERTHELESS, BAATHIS HAVE APPARENTLY DROPPED AT LEAST XBUPPRIVATE THE FAMILIAR RHETORIC THAT THEY WOULD REJECT ALL RESULTS OF SADAT'S INITIATIVE. END SUMMARY.

2. FOREIGN MINISTRY CHIEF OF PROTOCOL, MUWAFFAQ AL-QUDSI,  
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COMMENTED TO CHARGE MAY 17 THAT US SENATE APPROVAL OF ME AIRCRAFT SALES WAS A POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT. THIS CHANGE (SIC) IN THE SENATE'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE AREA WAS A RESULT OF THE SADAT INITIATIVE, HE VOLUNTEERED.

3. JADO NASSR, DIRECTOR OF FOREIGN RELATIONS, BAATH PARTY REVOLUTIONARY YOUTH UNION, TOLD POLOFF MAY 18 THAT SENATE

VOTE WAS A VICTORY FOR PRESIDENT CARTER AND WAS A POSITIVE AND BENEFICIAL DEVELOPMENT. HE NOTED THAT THE SALES HAD NO IMPACT ON THE PRACTICAL MILITARY BALANCE OF POWER IN THE AREA. THE EGYPTIAN F-5'S ARE NO MATCH FOR THE ISRAELI F-15'S AND 16'S. NASSR ADDED THAT THE SAUDIS NEEDED SOPHISTICATED AIRCRAFT FOR THE DEFENSE OF THEIR OIL FIELDS BUT THAT SAUDI ARABIA WAS NOT AND WOULD NEVER BECOME A CONFRONTATION STATE WITH ISRAEL. NEVERTHELESS, EVEN THOUGH THE SALES WILL NOT AFFECT THE BALANCE OF POWER, IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS FOR THE FIRST TIME MADE SUCH A PUBLIC COMMITMENT OF ARMS TO THE ARABS.

4. ISKANDAR HADDAD, DIRECTOR OF SPORTS AND SUMMER CAMPS FOR THE REVOLUTIONARY YOUTH UNION, RECOGNIZED THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SENATE VOTE IN THAT IT OVERRODE FOR THE FIRST TIME ISRAELI AND "ZIONIST LOBBY" OBJECTIONS. HOWEVER, HE SAID THAT THE IMPORTANCE OF THE VOTE WILL BECOME CLEAR IN THE MONTHS TO COME. WHAT SYRIA WILL BE LOOKING AT IS WHETHER PRESIDENT CARTER USES HIS STRENGTHENED POSITION TO MOVE TOWARD A COMPREHENSIVE RESOLUTION OF THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT, OR WHETHER THE PLANE SALE WAS SIMPLY A MANEUVER TO PROP UP SADAT.

5. NASSR COMMENTED THAT ANOTHER ASPECT OF THE VOTE WITH POTENTIALLY IMPORTANT RAMIFICATIONS WAS THE APPARENT DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE "ISRAELI ZIONIST LOBBY IN THE US" AND  
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AMERICAN JEWS. HE SAID THAT ATTITUDES MAY BE CHANGING IN THE US, BUT STILL THERE IS MORE SYMPATHY FOR GERMAN JEWS WHO WENT TO PALESTINE THAN THERE IS FOR PALESTINIANS WHO WERE DRIVEN FROM THEIR HOMES TO SOUTH LEBANON AND THEN WITH BOMBS FROM THEIR REFUGEE CAMPS IN SOUTH LEBANON FURTHER NORTH AND INTO OTHER COUNTRIES. ISRAELI PROPAGANDA WOULD HAVE IT THAT THE ARABS WANT TO PUSH THE JEWS INTO THE SEA. NASSR DISMISSED THIS PROPAGANDA AS UNREALISTIC. THE BAATH PARTY IS OPPOSED TO A THEOCRATIC STATE AND HAS NEVER THOUGHT IN TERMS OF RELIGION. JEWS, CHRISTIANS, MUSLIMS, WHO HAVE LIVED IN THIS AREA FOR GENERATIONS ARE ALL ARABS, ACCORDING TO NASSR, AND THE BAATH DOES NOT EXCLUDE ANY ARAB NOR SEEK TO EXPELL ANY ARAB INTO THE SEA. IN ANY EVENT, NASSR CONCLUDED, RESOLUTION OF THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM WILL TAKE TIME AS ATTITUDES GRADUALLY CHANGE.

6. COMMENT: THE IMPACT OF THE SENATE VOTE ON THE PLANE SALES IS CLEARLY FOR GREATER HERE THAN THE SYRIAN NEWSPAPERS WOULD HAVE US BELIEVE (DAMASCUS 2866). WHILE WE MIGHT HAVE EXPECTED A POSITIVE APPRECIATION FROM THE NON-BAATHI CHIEF OF PROTOCOL THE REACTION OF THE GENERALLY HARD-LINE BAATHI LEADERSHIP OF THE REVOLUTIONARY YOUTH CAME AS A PLEASANT

SURPRISE. FOR ALL THEIR RHETORIC, EVEN THE BAATHIS IN  
SYRIA DO NOT REJECT THE RESULTS OF SADAT'S VISIT AS LONG  
AS THOSE RESULTS ARE COMPATIBLE WITH SYRIA'S PERCEPTION OF  
A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT.  
PELLETREAU

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PRESS COMMENTS, FIGHTER AIRCRAFT, US CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS, MILITARY SALES, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS  
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**Draft Date:** 18 may 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
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**Review Markings:**  
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